

Teaching Reading: Gender Specific Strategies

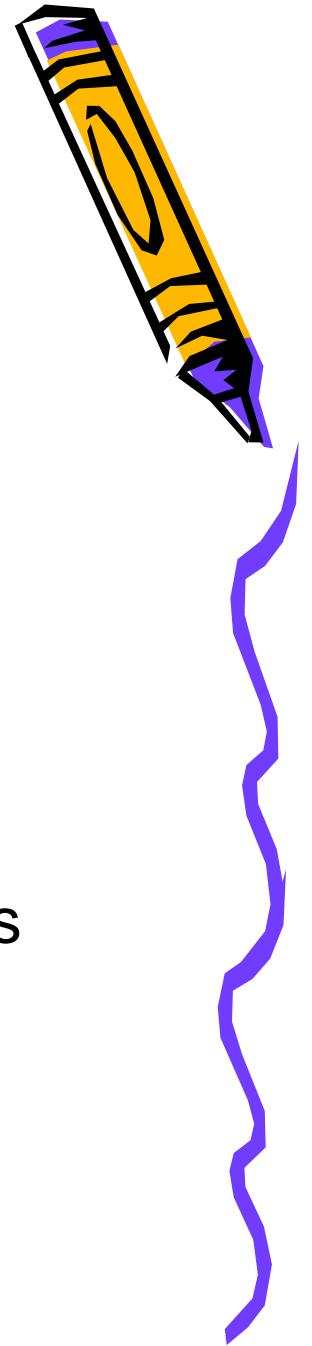
Presented by
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What Parents and Teachers Need to Know about the
Emerging Science of Sex Differences
by Leonard Sax, MD, PhD

"Until recently, there have been two groups of people: those who argue sex differences are innate and should be embraced and those who insist that they are learned and should be eliminated by changing the environment. Sax is one of the few in the middle -- convinced that boys and girls are innately different and that we must change the environment so differences don't become limitations."

-- TIME Magazine, cover story, March 7, 2005

Our Presentation

The information in this presentation should not be used to stereotype or limit our expectations of boys and girls, each is a unique individual. The information should be used to add wisdom to the individuality of every human being.

Why Single-Gender Classrooms?

- ✓ We noted a significant difference in our male and female scores on assessments including FCAT.
- ✓ We want to close the gap in scores for our students.
- ✓ We wanted to offer an educational alternative to parents and students.

Our Intended Outcomes

- Eliminate or decrease the achievement gap between males and females
- Eliminate or decrease the achievement gap between all sub groups
- Increase the use of brain-based research practices in the classrooms

Student Participation

- All parents of our students receive a letter asking if they would like their child in a gender specific class.
- Students are chosen for the program based on parent and teacher input.
- Students are grouped by achievement levels on county assessments so that we have an appropriate mix of abilities.

Girls are selected for the class who parents and teachers

agree would benefit from...

- Adopting more leadership roles
- Becoming more engaged in math and science
- improved self-esteem
- A quieter environment/reduced distractions
- Improved social-emotional development

Boys are selected for the class who parents and teachers

agree would benefit from...

- More opportunities for movement throughout the day
- Better social development
- Targeted reading support
- An environment conducive to a boy's learning

What's the difference?

Girls:

- * comfortable asking questions in class
- * respond to shopping questions
- * thrive in a relaxed environment
- * work in pairs or alone

What's the difference?

Boys:

- * do better in competitive environments
- * enjoy action-based lessons
- * enjoy time-oriented tasks
- * prefer to wait with asking questions to avoiding looking less smart
- * respond to sports questions

It should be noted that...

- "girls are more concerned than boys are with pleasing adults, such as parents and teachers" (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002, p. 397).
- Most boys are less motivated to study unless the material itself interests them.
- Girls experience sounds four times the level of boys.
- A well run boys classroom is LOUD.
- Small group learning works well for girls.

Classroom environments that support reading and writing:

What we've learned through our research:

- ✓ Knowing and understanding individual children and meeting their needs in schools and classrooms might help solve the problem of boy and girl differences.
- ✓ Boys are calmer in an environment with less light.
- ✓ Use primary colors to organize materials in your classroom.
- ✓ Use the multiple intelligences in an effort to reach all students.

Photos

- Will include photos from classrooms in final presentation.

Implications for Environments in Co-Educational Classes

- “At school only the quality of the teacher is a greater determinate of student success than the environment.” (Jensen, 2003)
- The use of music or other auditory learning devices can have a positive effect on learning.
- Indirect but bright natural light is best for learning.
- Don't be afraid to take students outside for some lessons.
- Keep rooms between 68 and 72 degrees for optimal learning.
- Boys need more space to work than girls.

Boy Readers Generally:

- Take longer to attain reading mastery.
- Prefer reading action stories.
- Prefer non-fiction over fiction.
- Do not like role playing, keep assignments objective and fact-oriented.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Girl Readers Generally:

- Read better and sooner than boys.
- Prefer fiction over nonfiction.
- Prefer to read books where they can be analytical about the character's behavior.
- Girls enjoy role playing.

Photos

Photos of girls and boys reading to be added.

Implications for Reading in Co-Educational Classes

- Have books everywhere in the classroom so that boys who aren't comfortable with reading can get used to the ever present books.
- Keep directions to assignments short and give them one at a time.
- Allow students to draw during a read aloud for pleasure.
- Use hands-on activities, where possible, to help teach reading.
- Make both fiction and nonfiction a part of your classroom library.

Boy Writers Generally:

- You'll find boys at the extremes- their ability range tends to be wider than the range for girls.
- Boys revel in subversive humor, a form of humor that requires a certain amount of risk taking.
- Prefer to write laying comfortably on the floor.
- Like to write about action as if watching a movie.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Photos or Samples...

...of boys writing to be added.

Girl Writers Generally:

- Girl writers use writing to negotiate closeness
- Girls like to write about relationships
- Write stories with details about people's feelings.
- Girls like to write themselves into the story.

QuickTime™ and a
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are needed to see this picture.

Photos or Samples...

...of girls writing to be added.

Implications for Writing in Co-Educational Classes

- Boys do well with story starters or topics.
- Vary the seating options during writing time.
- Allow students to verbalize topics before independent writing.
- Allow students to talk and confer during Writing Workshop.
- Provide opportunities for a variety of the types of writing.
- Allow students to sketch before writing. (early grades)
- Remember that students who struggle with handwriting will generally struggle with writing.

What our Reading Data Shows

Reading	Boys	Girls
All Boys Class		----
All Girls Class	----	
Mixed Classes		

What our Writing Data Shows

Writing	Boys	Girls
All Boys Class		----
All Girls Class	----	
Mixed Classes		

Where do we go from here...

- During the 2008/2009 school year we will offer single-gender classes in Kindergarten through fifth grade.
- We will continue to collect data on our gender as well as coeducational classes.

Questions?

- Thanks so much for attending our presentation! We hope you will find the information useful as you begin the new school year.

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are needed to see this picture.

Resource List

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